Famous Artists Painting Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Section **12**

Portrait painting

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EDGAR DEGAS
Head of a Young Woman
The Louvre

The air of quiet vivacity which distinguishes this *Head of a Young Woman* by Degas seems to belong to the subject's features and expression, yet it is due also to the flow of light and dark, in an unbroken rhythm, around the head. In these shadows Degas perceived a series of simply curving shapes which reveal the essentials of the form and swallow up distracting details. Above all it is in the blending of edges, with pigment coaxed from tone to tone via the grainy texture of the canvas, that Degas reveals his superb skill.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

PICASSO. Gertrude Stein

In making this portrait of his good friend Gertrude Stein, Picasso sought to achieve a strong statement of personality. Notice how face and hands, the two most revealing elements, are modeled clearly as forms; the remainder of the figure and the background create a simple pattern of shapes.

National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
(Chester Dale Collection)

RENOIR.
Girl with a Watering Can

Renoir succeeded in capturing the forthright charm of this little girl by emphasizing her deep blue eyes, her peaches-and-cream complexion, her soft blonde hair, and the delicate working in her dress. Appropriately, he painted her against a background of quiet curves and dainty patterns of flowers.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

VAN GOGH. L'Arlesienne

In a sense every Van Gogh portrait combines indistinguishable characteristics of both subject and painter. The artist seeks primarily to set down his emotional reaction to the sitter; he redesigns shapes and colors for expressive purposes. Here low-keyed blues, greens, and reds are set against a brilliant yellow background, and silhouetted shapes are patterned to contrast with the impassivity of the features.

The portrait

In the section on Human Form our object was to see how the human body is constructed, what the relationship of the separate parts is, and how these parts work together in a marvelously versatile and balanced organism.

But there is more to the human being than solid form, and more than bone and muscle; there is also that indefinable quality called personality which so unmistakably distinguishes one individual from another. In this section on the Portrait we will see how a number of famous artists go about capturing personality in their portraits.

To most people it seems a simple matter to define a portrait. A portrait, by common consent, is a likeness of the individual who sits for it. Even the law of the land protects the subject in this regard. If you have commissioned a portrait with the understanding that it shall resemble you, you cannot be required to pay for it on completion unless you are satisfied that it really "looks like you." This fact puts the professional portraitist in a difficult spot. He may see qualities in his patron which he would like to record in paint – qualities of appearance or personality which especially intrigue him. But, by necessity, he must paint what his patron sees in the mirror, rather than what he sees in his patron. The result is often nothing more than a superficial likeness which may or may not communicate to any real degree what the personality of the sitter is actually like.

For this reason many fine and sensitive artists hesitate to accept portrait commissions, and in any case they are unlikely to undertake a portrait until they have become well acquainted with the sitter and have discovered bonds of sympathy. Often the best portraits are those of the artist's family and friends. That is what we should expect. For these are the individuals the artist knows best – and they are the subjects likely to be most understanding if, for his own expressive reasons, he finds it desirable to depart from a photographic likeness in the interests of clearer, more forceful statement.

A photographic likeness is certainly one kind of portrait. But it is by no means the only kind, and may well be less successful in capturing the true personality of the subject than a painting in which likeness is not the primary objective. We are therefore justified in defining portraiture more broadly.

In this more inclusive sense, a portrait is any painting inspired by a particular individual whose essential character you are attempting to reflect in your canvas. This definition encompasses a wide variety of approaches: an impersonally objective study of the sitter; a free interpretation of the subject's personality, without loss of basic physical resemblance; or even a purely subjective expression in paint of your personal reaction to the sitter.

You may want to experiment with all these different types of portraits. It's best, however, to begin with an attempt to put down the physical likeness. Then, if you wish, you can go on to freer, more subjective presentation. First things must come first – and with this approach you will more readily gain an insight into the face and its character that will help you to understand it and express it in your own creative, personal way on canvas.

The studio, model, myself, and equipment.

Painting a portrait – by Stahl

This portrait of my daughter Regina is one of my favorites. Painting the people you know and love best is always most fun. I chose the props carefully to suggest the atmosphere of childhood.

Not long after a person takes up this most satisfying and yet tormenting hobby of painting, a natural desire develops to paint a portrait of a member of the family or a friend. I can assure you that this is not an easy thing to do. A sound knowledge of drawing is perhaps the first prerequisite, but not entirely necessary. I am of course assuming that the average hobbyist realizes it will probably be a long time before he or she turns out masterpieces. The main thing is to have fun – and you can. As you become more practiced and learn more about drawing, you will have that much more fun and satisfaction – and, I might add, that much more dissatisfaction.

Most amateurs try painting a portrait in oil too soon. I would suggest that they first learn to handle the oil medium. Start by doing many still-life paintings in oil, then turn to landscape. After you feel confident that you have mastered the medium to a certain extent, try painting the human figure or head.

At first don't attempt to get a likeness. Of course you should try to copy every value, shape, and color as accurately as you can, and if you manage to do this successfully a likeness will emerge automatically. But don't consciously *try* for the likeness. You will have enough trouble as it is. (The word "trouble" in painting does not have the evil connotations that it has in other things. "Trouble" in painting means "problem" or "puzzle"—in other words, "fun.") When you have developed some skill in painting the head you are ready to attempt a real likeness in oils.

Now if you promise me that you will not become discouraged, or give up and throw away your brushes, I will say forget all the foregoing good advice. Just get a canvas board or canvas, set out your colors on a good palette, talk some unsuspecting friend into posing, and begin painting. It doesn't actually matter much if you are not completely successful the first few – or many – times you try making a portrait. Even the most competent painter is not always able to get the effect he wants. You will enjoy yourself anyway, as will your friend (if he has a sense of humor) and that, after all, is why you are painting.

Start by painting *just the head* on a canvas no larger than 16″ x 20″. Don't try for a perfect likeness at the very beginning. Try instead to get the big proportions and the general character of the sitter's head, and attempt to place the features accurately. As you paint along you can correct detail and even some of the earlier larger proportions.

Before you touch brush to canvas, make several pencil or charcoal sketches in order to become more familiar with the general features of the sitter. You may find, too, that one of these sketches is just the thing you are looking for when it comes to deciding how the head shall be placed on the canvas. These drawings do not have to be finished affairs. Some may take five minutes or so. But I do wish to impress upon you the fact that preliminary work is most important. You will get out of this only what you put into it.

Now let's talk about some of the phases of portraiture that go beyond the mere capturing of a likeness.These are some of the things you might look for while you paint, and this knowledge may help make your next portrait a little better than the last — not necessarily in technique, but in creativeness, in idea or inspiration.

Every great portrait is 50 per cent a portrait of the artist who created it. Even an amateur who is just painting a portrait for fun is bound to inject, unwittingly perhaps, a great deal of his own personality into his work. You will find that although you are painting the likeness of another, that likeness will be stamped with your own personality. This will come through in your use of imagination, your manner of painting, and the way you feel about the subject.

Rembrandt's great ability as an artist made all of his sitters one family — his family. His emotional drive charges through all his paintings like a wild stallion. His portraits are important because of their quality as pictures, rather than because they present a likeness of someone. He painted people not as they saw themselves, and not as others saw them, but as *he* saw them or wished to see them. He did not hesitate to make heroes even out of beggars. Yet at the same time he brought out the character of his subjects so powerfully that we know positively we are looking at people who moved and breathed and lived a life strong and vital.

Imagination

In the group of portraits at the right by Rembrandt, the Cuyps, and Maes we can see very easily what imagination can do, and how the artist's personality shows through. The Cuyp and Maes portraits are uninspired as compared with the Rembrandt pair. Rembrandt dressed his sitters to suit himself. He wanted first of all a fine picture, as well as a good portrait. These two people are definite types, cast as Rembrandt chose to cast them. He got the effect he wanted in both cases partly by his use of costume. In the portrait of Margaretha de Geer, it meant adding just a bit of handkerchief. (The good lady would not stand for any nonsense, even from the great Rembrandt, and so no fancy costumes for her, thank you.) Just a handkerchief — but what a difference it makes!

So I say, pull out the props. Paint your people in interesting settings, in fascinating clothes. Then if the painting turns out to be a poor likeness you still have a charming picture.

Caricature in portrait painting

Exaggerate! Just a little, accent the decidedly personal features of the sitter. If the girl you are painting has large blue eyes, make them a wee bit larger and a wee bit bluer.

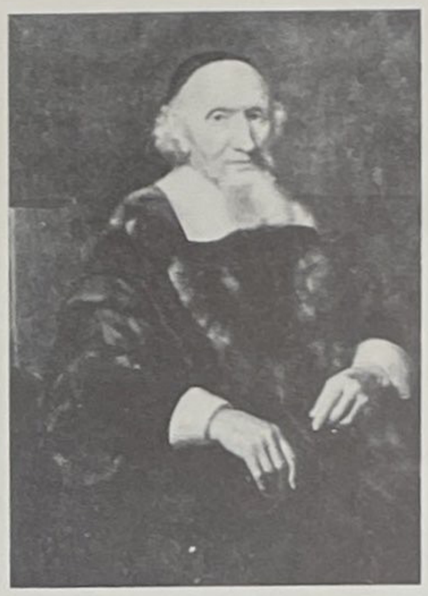
These methods, carried further, will result ultimately in pure caricature; and that perhaps is what you don't want. So be careful. There is something cartoony and humorous about most people's physiognomy. Observe these characteristics carefully, but don't overdo them. Keep a wee bit this side of humor.

Things to do and things to avoid

I don't know why it is, but it seems that first attempts at an oil portrait are always composed in this manner — stiff, rigid, with eyes staring straight ahead. The left side of the face an exact duplicate of the right. If the subject is a man, the tie very neatly and symmetrically positioned. The background either a horrid raw green or red. The color of the face made up of various shades of white mixed with

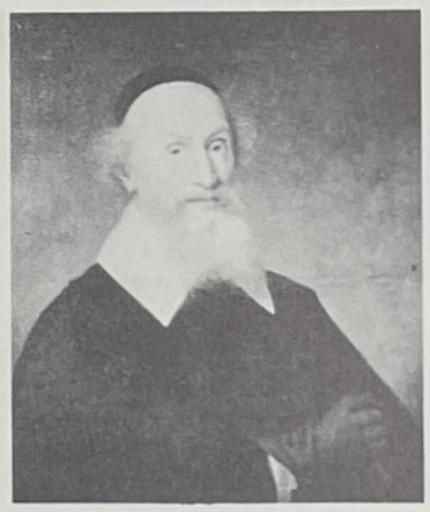
REMBRANDT. Jacob Trip
National Gallery, London

REMBRANDT. Margaretha de Geer
National Gallery, London



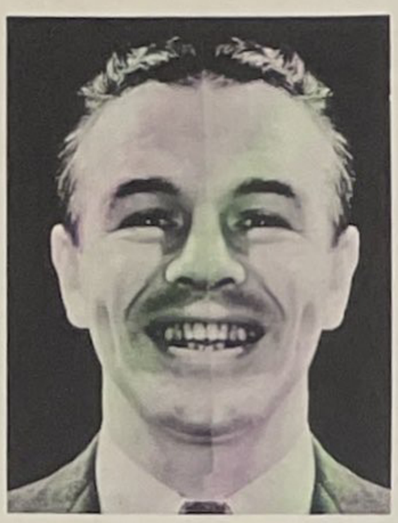
NICOLAES MAES. Jacob Trip
Budapest Museum

NICOLAES MAES. Margaretha de Geer
Budapest Museum



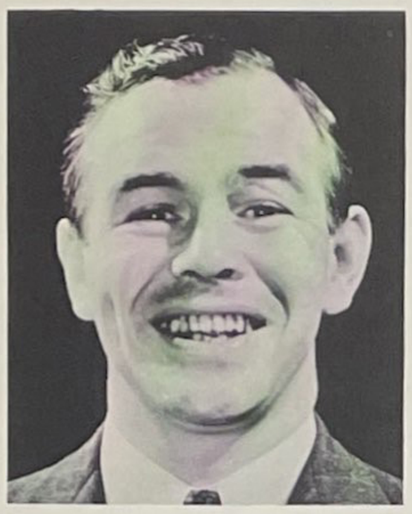
AELBERT CUYP. Jacob Trip
Dr. Lutjens, Amsterdam

JACOB G. CUYP. Margaretha de Geer
Private collection



I have cut the face in half, and reversed the negative to reproduce *two right sides.*

Here is how he would look if the *two left sides* of his face were mirrored. Each side of the face is quite different in proportions and detail. You must observe these differences carefully if you hope to capture a likeness.



The model in reality.

pure red and flecked with burnt sienna. These errors, now that you know them, you will not commit.

The left side of the human face is *entirely* different from the right, as the photos prove. Nature never repeats itself in exactly the same way when creating plastic forms — not even in a human face. Your left eye (no matter how perfect your features may be) is not exactly like your right eye, and so on. Furthermore, the positioning of your eyes and other features is not symmetrical. One eye is either higher or lower than the other, one nostril slightly different in shape and position on the nose. The nose itself is bent more or less either to right or left. These slight differences do not make us a race of freaks, by any means. They do make us a race of characters and individuals — extremely paintable subject matter.

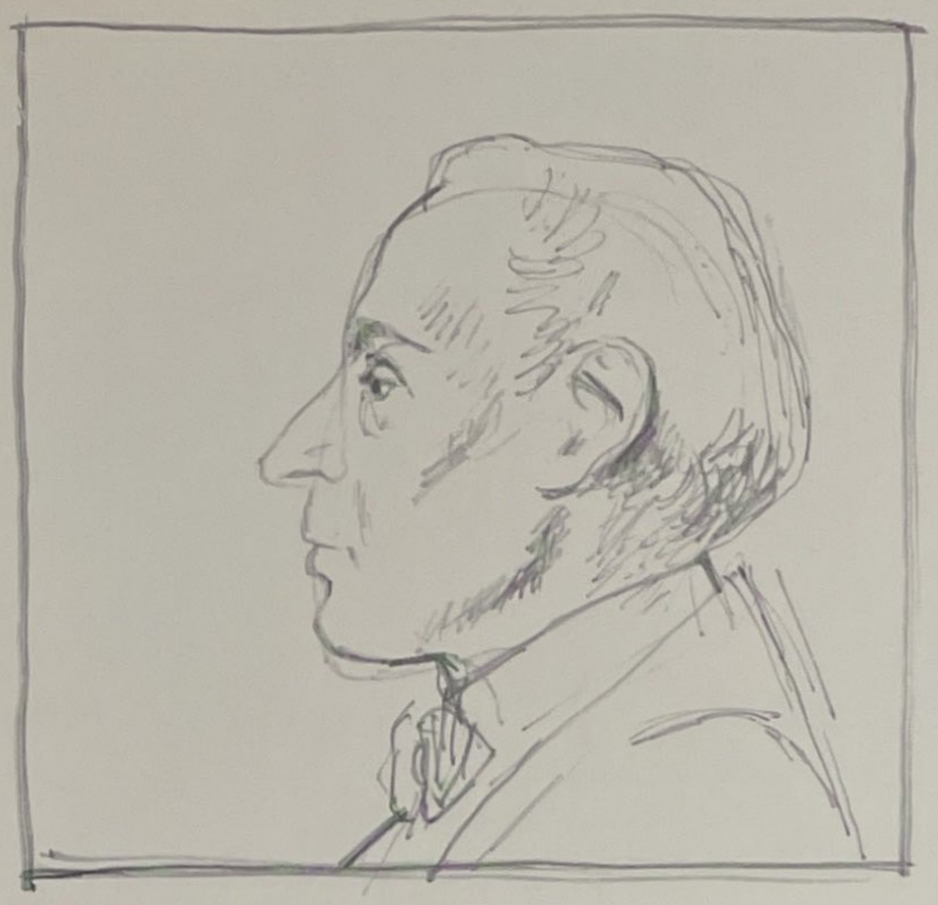
Don't give equal importance to all the features. Think of the features as actors in a play. Let one or two of the features which are most characteristic of your sitter be the stars of your show. For example, the sitter may have eyes which are extremely striking. Play up the eyes, then, by exaggerating them or by carrying them further into detail.

Allow your sitter to take a natural pose. If he or she has a habit of cocking the head to one side, paint it that way. See to it that the model is comfortable. You'll get a lot less squirming and the pose will be more characteristic of the sitter. Pose your model in a setting that is in harmony with either the occupation or the mood of the sitter. I would advise, at least in the beginning, simple backgrounds, grayed in color. Paint your background thinly; that is, with very little paint and much medium. Then it will be easy to make changes as they become advisable.

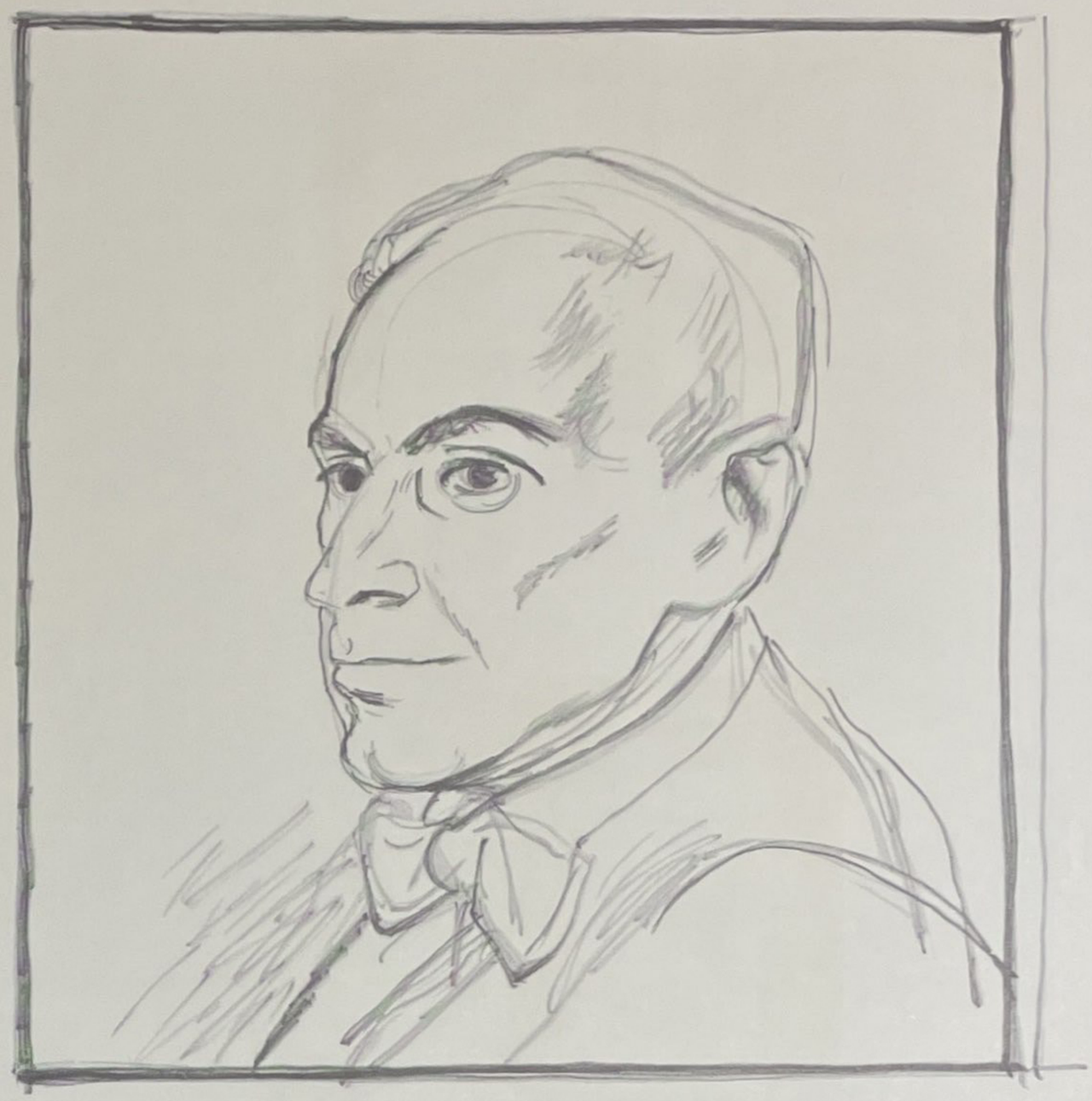
I personally do not make a careful drawing on my canvas before I start to paint. I prefer to consider painting and drawing as one operation. This you may try as you wish, but for the beginner I do not think it too wise. It is better to draw a careful representation of your subject with either charcoal or brush on the canvas first, and then begin to paint. This is true especially in the case of portraiture.

Portrait sketch of my little son, Davey. The painting is not really "finished" in the sense that I have loaded it down in any area with precise detail; but when I reached this point I knew that nothing further was needed to capture his personality.

In this fairly early portrait of my Grandmother I tried to capture both likeness and personality. As you can see, the detail is reserved entirely for the face. It is much easier to paint older people than young boys or teen-age girls, because the years have brought out character in the face clearly.



Like the direct front pose, the profile is likely to be monotonous and uninteresting. It would be much better to paint a three-quarter view. ➡



The three-quarter front view has been popular for centuries, and I believe it is best, generally speaking.

Placing the head on canvas

Think of the background as a shape unto itself. Try to make it as interesting as you can.

Allow more space in front of the face than in back of the head, lest this occur. ➡

Rough sketch for a portrait. The light areas of the head make an interesting pattern against the dark.

Break your picture area up into thirds, approximately, and place important subject matter where the lines cross. It's a pretty safe rule-of-thumb method for early experiments in arrangement.

Bad arrangements of head and figure in the space

a) Head too high and too far to side
b) Face too close to left
c) Head too low in frame
d) Head too high in frame
e) Head fills up too much of picture
f) Profile too near picture edge

In the sketches above, the figure has been set within the picture area in various ways which would be difficult to handle successfully. A competent, experienced painter can use unorthodox methods of arrangement like some of those shown, and get away with it — but only because he is ingenious enough to make compensating adjustments in tone or composition. From a practical point of view, I would advise the beginner not to break too much with tradition.

Hands

Most people have trouble drawing hands — and that includes the most accomplished of professional artists. So it is natural that someone just taking up painting will run into trouble. A most important thing to keep in mind when drawing a hand is to decide what the hand is *doing*. Draw that — capture the *gesture*—then even if the hand is not too well drawn it will still look convincing. A hand can be drawn perfectly, but if there is no feeling of gesture it will be static and expressionless.

Don't fuss with the hands too much. Very often they may be left roughed-in, unfinished, and the painting will benefit because more attention will then be directed to the head. So much has been written elsewhere in the course on the actual drawing of hands that I pass over this particular phase of portrait painting. Remember, however, that hands can describe the precise character of a person just as well, or even better, than the head itself.

Things to do

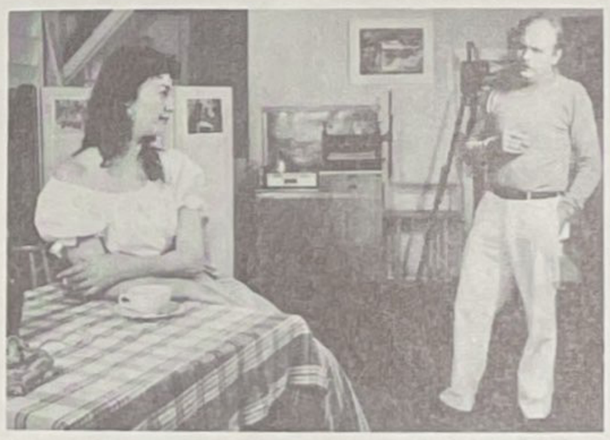
1. Allow your sitter to assume a comfortable, natural pose.
2. Plan positioning of the head carefully. (Create an interesting composition.)
3. Make a number of "portrait" sketches in pencil or charcoal *before* you start to paint. (This will familiarize you with the subject's features, and a better likeness in oil will result.)
4. A small thumbnail sketch in color will also help. (Not for likeness, but for arrangement and color planning.)
5. Try doing portraits of older people first. Their faces have more pronounced character, and it is therefore easier to grasp outstanding qualities of feature. This will make it easier for you to get a good likeness. Younger people are much more difficult, especially pretty girls. I don't want you to become discouraged at your first attempt, thus this suggestion.
6. Use larger brushes when you begin painting, smaller ones later. Remember — first things first. Establish the large areas and forms, and the main gestures, first of all. Work out detail later.
7. Here's a little rhyme to remember on the use of color: "A little bit of blue in everything you do."
8. Combine a bit of still life or some sort of "prop" with your portrait subject. This will add to the fun, and if the likeness doesn't "come off" you still won't be too discouraged.
9. Study great portraits.
10. Find a "god" among the great painters. Worship and imitate him. This is how very young children learn, and it works for people just starting to paint. It works equally well for people who have been students for some time. If you have character yourself, it will come through later and most of your influences will be lost. Renoir had his Delacroix; Delacroix had his Rubens. Beethoven owed much to Haydn and Mozart, and in his early work these influences are highly apparent.

There will be no list of "Don'ts." Very often a hobbyist does everything in a manner that is obviously "wrong" — and yet through a certain naivete and charm he comes up with a really fine picture. I do not wish to destroy certain wonderful conceptions by replacing them with static, unemotional, technical achievements. Paint as you will! Study, practice — and have fun.

1 My model brought along quite an assortment of everyday clothes, ranging from sports clothes to evening gowns. At this point I don't know what the final choice will be, but I am considering which costume will make for the best picture from a compositional viewpoint.

2 I move a mass of her hair forward. I feel that if the hair falls on both sides of the head in the same way it might be monotonous.

3 It might look better from here . . .



4 "Please turn your head this way, Sarah." Hmm . . . that's not so good either.

Posing the model

5 Or from here? Perhaps a profile?

6 This is the best angle, I guess, but that arm and left hand don't look too good. The pose seems to be clumsy.

7 This is fine, but her right arm looks too short. The hand holding the cigarette isn't good.

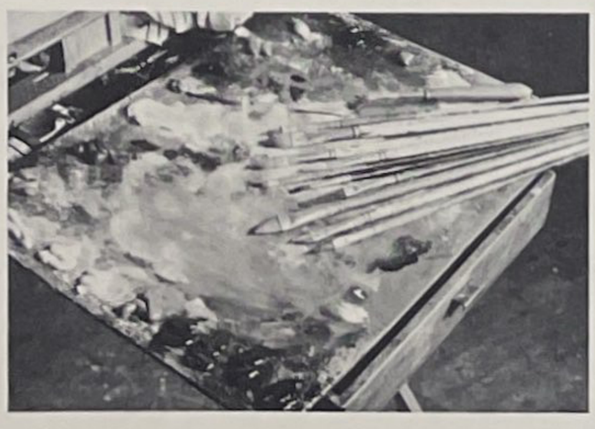
8 This is it! The jug works in well, and the addition of the teacup is a nice touch.

9 In arranging the drape, toss it over . . . Don't try to "arrange" too much — accident will do a better job.

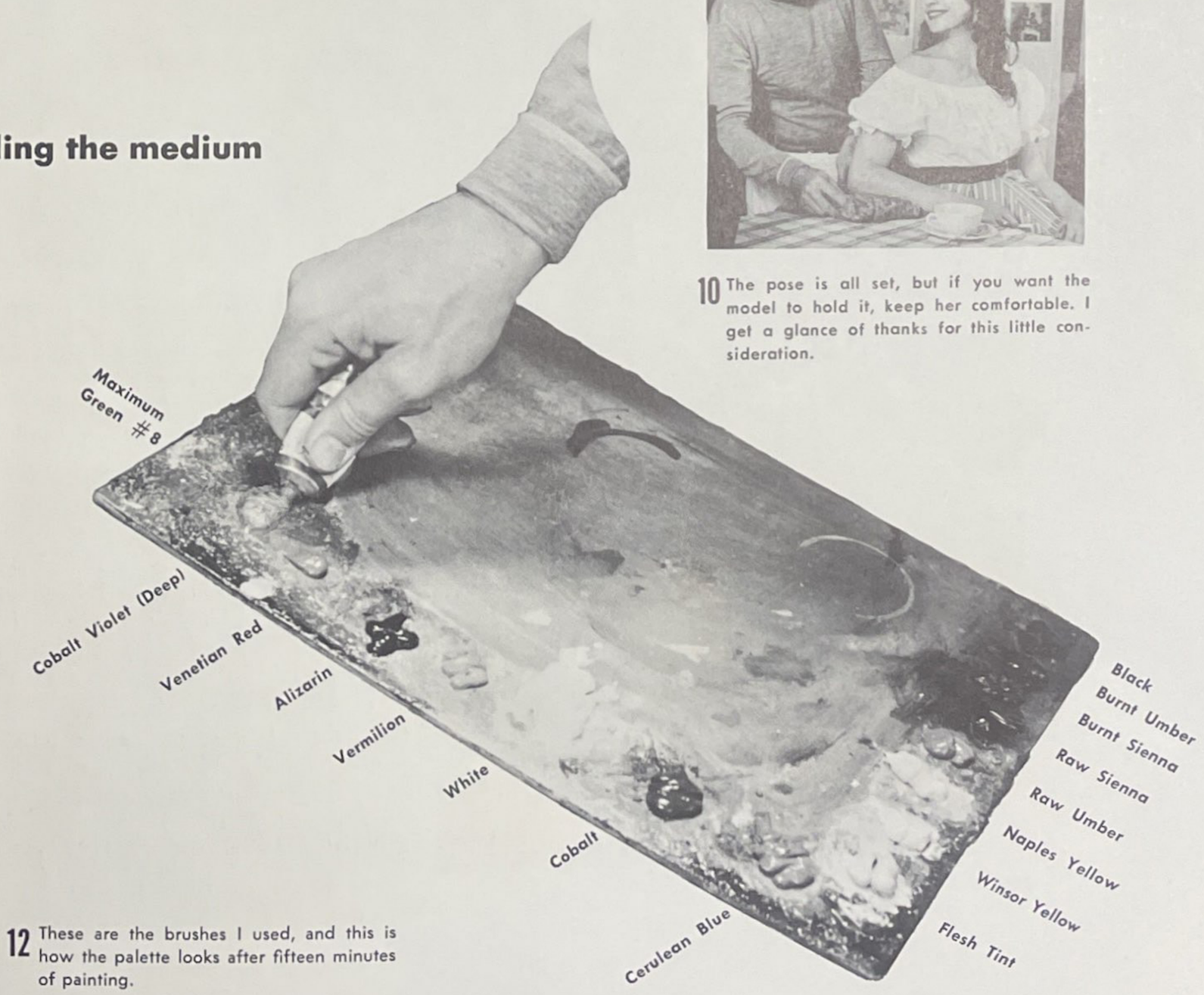
10 The pose is all set, but if you want the model to hold it, keep her comfortable. I get a glance of thanks for this little consideration.

Handling the medium

11 Here is my palette as I start to paint and the two brushes I use at the beginning.



12 These are the brushes I used, and this is how the palette looks after fifteen minutes of painting.



13 My medium is turpentine. I also use turpentine to clean my brushes as I paint, but when I have finished I wash them thoroughly in kerosene.

14 I think it unwise to start work on a dead-white canvas, so I tone it with a mixture of umber washed down transparently with turps. You may tone your canvas with any color you wish, but I would suggest that you stick to grayed tones. If you use ordinary cigarette lighter fluid instead of turpentine, the toning-down will dry very quickly.

15 I wipe out streaks with a dry cloth.

16 Hold your brush in this manner. If you hold it as you would a pencil, you will not have full freedom of arm movement.

17 When the painting is carried about this far, I scrape it with a small palette knife. This tends to pull color and tone together, and unify the picture somewhat. It also eliminates unwanted heavy painting. If the paint gets too thick at the beginning it becomes unmanageable. Thickly painted areas are applied later and left unscraped.

18 The finger can be as useful as a brush in softening edges. In this way one can also flatten or pull together areas.

19 From time to time I spray "Retouch Varnish" directly into the wet paint. As a result the paint sets more quickly and becomes easier to handle. It also dries faster, allowing one to work into freshly painted areas without picking up the underlying coat. I use this varnish exclusively for this phase of painting.

Making the painting – step-by-step

20 After the wash of turps and oil paint is thoroughly dry on the canvas, I proceed to "lay in" the general lines of the composition. You will notice that I try to plan just the big areas of the picture, the big proportions. These are sketched with no regard for nicety of line or delicate draftsmanship. My only concern is to capture the powerful underlying structure of the picture. Notice also that I make no attempt to "draw" an eye, mouth, etc. I merely want to indicate where they are to be located. Up to this point I have been working with a No. 6 bristle brush, shown in Figure 11.

21 Next I lay in the big dark pattern with a larger bristle brush. I use sable water color brushes only at the very end, if at all. As I proceed I correct the drawing and make various changes.

22 Some of the background toning is now painted in with a rather large brush. Next I work on the shadow side of the face. I am careful that all of the tones on face and background are halfway between the lightest light and the darkest dark. I have scumbled a bit of this lightest light on the blouse front in order to judge what tone is halfway between light and dark.

23 More tone is scumbled into the head. The original harsh darks of the eyes have been painted over with middle tone; their use as a guide has come to an end. I have reinserted the dark tone of the right eye with a single brush stroke, and I am trying for more of the middle tones throughout the painting.

24 Now I begin to soften things, pull the darks together. The lights get the same treatment. A few more tones of dark placed in the eyes make this part of the head look almost complete. Two or three more strokes and it will be. Next the nose and mouth. Not more than *seven* strokes of the brush were used to paint both of the eyes up to this point. You won't be able to do this right away. It will take much study of the human eye and still more practice in painting. But it is something to strive for. Incidentally, four strokes of the brush made the nose, about six the mouth. I realized at this point that the window would not work — the shape was too square and rigid. The effect of a large opening to the out-of-doors would be better. With a few strokes of the brush, I tell myself (and others) just how the hand will be. More tone is added to the background. These areas of tone in the background, both dark and light, are not put in "just anywhere"; they are very carefully considered. For example, the area of dark to the girl's left was added to vary an uninteresting section and to help balance the dark areas on the opposite side of the picture.

At this point I put the picture into the frame and continue to paint. I do a lot of scraping with the palette knife to the very end, where necessary.

25 Two more strokes are added to the eyes. I am now trying for the more delicate planes of the face. I am also experimenting with various forms, and trying to discover how the folds in the drapery will be arranged. I try out a saw-toothed edge on the drape. The cup and saucer get more work, and in the process they are moved and enlarged. Two strokes of light on top of the girl's fingers make the hand look more complete.

26 The girl's right eyebrow is now placed. I saved this job until I was sure just where it was to go, and how light it should be. If I had painted it in earlier, corrections of other parts in that area might have wrecked it anyway. I wanted to be sure, also, that the flesh under and around the eyebrow was the right shape and tone before putting this stroke in. After all, eyebrows and eyelashes are not the solid part of the head that, let us say, the nose, mouth, or eyes are. In the beginning, suggest lightly where they might go — but finish them last. Now I'm beginning to finish areas, softening edges and painting in the more subtle tones. I use a variety of brushes, some large, and perhaps a few sables (both the flats and the round water color type).

27 I decided the saw-tooth drapery edge was annoying and detracted from the girl's head, so I simplified it. Although my model had no bracelets, I painted them in to break up the area on top of the arm. They add interest as well. The picture is finished.

This is a full-size detail of the finished painting. There are many things you can learn from a careful study of this picture which will help you improve your portraits.

Notice particularly the *values* and the *edges*. See how simply the light side of the face has been handled. This area is *not* a single flat value. If it was it would have no sense of form. However, the changes in value such as you see along the jaw and chin, the nostrils and the eye socket are very slight. If these values were not carefully controlled, or made any darker, they would destroy the sense of form. This same simplification applies to the handling of the neck, chest and shoulders. The values throughout this whole area are very close.

The *edges* between these areas of slightly different value, as well as the lights and shadows, are very soft and diffused to emphasize the fleshy quality of the form. There are no overworked halftones or highlights of white paint that would make this look like wood, metal or china. The edge between the figure and background is equally soft to emphasize the roundness and solidity of the form. The hair is painted very simply. The only modeling occurs on the right side of the head and in the areas where the hair falls over the shoulder and arm.

Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris

FRIEZ. Portrait of Fernand Fleuret

At first glance one might think this painting was half-finished; the background and clothing have been suggested in the most sketchy manner. The facial expression, the shape of the head, the gesture of the body have all been captured, however, and this is the essence of portraiture. Often it is better not to finish up unimportant details that would detract from the main consideration — the face. Notice how the composition is arranged to take the eye constantly back to the head.

Collection of Robert Lehman, New York

MARQUET. Sergeant of the Colonial Regiment

The artist has summed up a type of military personality by emphasizing the stolid, impassive monumentality of his subject. He has contributed to this impression by setting a rather small head on a stiff, elongated torso. To emphasize the silhouette he has kept the background perfectly plain. The face and hands stand out in spite of the strong color in epaulets and stripes because only they are modeled; the uniform is treated as a flat pattern.

Rosenberg and Stiebel Gallery, New York

RENOIR. Portrait of Coco

Only a sketch, perhaps, but how perfectly realized! The soft little features and the plump hands and arms are carefully modeled, but in a very simple manner. The hair seems drawn in detail, but actually a few well-considered strokes have done the job. How incomplete the portrait would have been without the two apparently careless marks that place the hair ribbon! Notice how everything in the painting invites the eye to follow the little girl's glance to the table top and the mysterious little object that is her whole concern.

Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art

MONET. Portrait of Dr. Leclenche

Monet let the good doctor assume what is obviously a characteristic pose, and painted him very directly. A small figure, he is given greater importance by letting his weight seem to distort the chair. The line across the background is important. It is positioned to help the chair support the figure, and is turned downward at the left to restore balance in the composition. Face and hands alone are fully modeled. Clothing is handled as an interesting pattern.

REMBRANDT
Flora
Courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The face of Rembrandt's housekeeper, Hendrickje Stoffels, the model he used for this portrait of the Roman goddess Flora, lacked the idealized beauty customarily associated with classical subjects. Yet Rembrandt gave her somewhat irregular features remarkable character and interest by his use of lights massed against darks with soft, disappearing edges. The very irregularity of contours was heightened by the great hat, whose upswept leaves echo the line of the cheek. Strikingly demonstrated is the wide possible range of flesh colors — from deep purple-browns to the most delicate off-whites.

AUGUSTE RENOIR
Madame Henriot
Collection Dr. and Mrs. David M. Levy, New York

Renoir expressed the ethereal appeal of *Madame Henriot*, an actress of the Comédie Francaise, by treating her face as a radiant reflector of light. Only an Impressionist with an eye trained to detect the most subtle fluctuations of light across a surface could have succeeded in capturing the rounded reality of the portrait through such a delicate variation of warm and cool tints. With the exception of the pearly shadows around the nose and the alternately blurred and defined edges in the warm brown hair, modeling was completely suppressed. It was for the eyes with their surprising darkness and intensity that the artist reserved his climactic note, to which all else is subordinated.

PAUL CÉZANNE
Portrait of Louis Guillaume
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Chester Dale Collection

The striking sense of sculptural fullness
in Cézanne's *Portrait of Louis Guillaume* is underlined by
its combination of symmetry and asymmetry. The form of the head is
nearly egg-shaped yet boldly varied in its two halves both
by subtle changes in individual features and by
a shifting of planes to the right. Accentuating the
twisting central axis of the face is the incisive arc connecting
nose and eyebrow, where blue shadow is
sharply overlaid by an impasto of warm ochers. An asymmetrical scheme
is carried out in the background as well, with the mass
of the figure swinging closer to the right edge
and anchored at the left by the curving chair back.